(28)

Mr. ATKINSON'S CONFESSION OF HIS FAITH

Deliver'd at his

ORDINATION,

Janu. the 7th. $17\frac{12}{13}$.

NOW

Reprinted by his Order with a ſhort PREFACE to ſatisfy the World, That he hath not in the leaſt given in to any New Notions concerning the Ever Bleſſed TRINITY in Unity, but ſincerely believes that there is one Onely Living and True GOD, and that this GOD is FATHER SON and HOLY GHOST.

LONDON:

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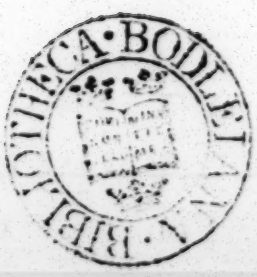
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THE PREFACE.

THAT *the World, and particularly my own Congregation, may see I have not alter'd my Sentiments with Reference unto the great Doctrine of the* TRINITY, *I have thought it proper to Reprint my* Confession of Faith; *and do make this solemn and publick Declaration, as in the Presence of the All-knowing and Heart-searching* GOD, *That I don't*

know I have in any one Point departed from that Faith which I profeſs'd before many Witneſſes, when I receiv'd the Honour from CHRIST *to be put into the Miniſtry. Tho' I muſt own, That inſtead of Subſcriptions to Words of other Men as fallible as myſelf, I have always choſe to expreſs my Faith either in my own Words, (which all will grant I can with greater Certainty underſtand) or in the Words which the* HOLY GHOST *teacheth; and if any deſire my Explication of ſuch a Text, as,* I and my Father are One: *I will freely declare, I believe it takes in a Unity*

Unity of Nature as well as of Conſent. So that the Author of The Noble Stand, *might have ſpar'd that hard Inſinuation, as if Miniſters were againſt giving their own Explication of Scripture to thoſe that in a reſpectful, ſerious Manner apply'd to them* *.

OUR *Reaſons for not Subſcribing the Paper offer'd to us at* Salters-Hall, *March* 3, *have been made publick, and I perſuade myſelf, that the unprejudic'd Part of Mankind are convinc'd, our refuſing to ſubſcribe at that Time, and in*

* Page 27.

in that Manner, was very conſiſtent with our Belief of the Doctrine contain'd in the Article *and* Catechiſm *(wherein we are ſo happy as to be acquited by our Subſcribing Brethren) and alſo very agreeable to the Principles of the* REFORMATION, *and to our own* Principles *as* Proteſtant Diſſenters, *declaring,* That the BIBLE is our Religion, and nothing elſe.

FOR *my own Part, I thought there was the leſs Reaſon for Subſcribing, becauſe I never had been ſuſpected of any thing like* Arianiſm; *but on the contrary in my*

my Course of Expounding and Preaching have taken all proper Occasions to defend the Doctrine of the TRINITY *in the best Manner I could; besides, to subscribe the forementionʼd Paper, was out of Place, Time and Order; for we met to agree upon Heads of Advice, and not to adjust any Doctrinal Controversies. And I must own, the Subscription, as then propos'd and insisted upon, in my weak Judgment, had the Appearance of setting up humane Compositions for a Standard of Truth; which I could not come into, least I should seem to charge the* BIBLE *with Imperfection*

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and Obſcurity in Points abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation; *tho' I acquit the Subſcribers from any ſuch Deſign*; *and I am fully ſatisfy'd we are all of the ſame Sentiments*, That the BIBLE is our only Rule, and that all Men muſt judge for themſelves by this Rule, as well as that the Doctrine of the Glorious TRINITY is moſt certainly contain'd in the Inſpir'd Writings. *And I hope, we ſhall ſtill love as Brethren, and endeavour to* keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

London, May the 9th. 1719.

The

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

I *BELIEVE in One Onely, the Living and True* GOD, *who is an Absolute, Independent, Eternal, Unchangeable, and Spiritual* BEING, whose Existence is of Himself; *Omnipotent*, can do all Things that Consist with his Wisdom and other Perfections; *None hath an Arm like* GOD, *none can thunder with a Voice like Him*; *Omniscient*, fully comprehends all Things pass'd, present, and to come, and know-

eth how to turn every Thing to his own Glory; *Every-where present, filleth All, and is in All*; *Eternal, the* Alpha *and* Omega, *the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End*; *before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever He had formed the Earth and the World, from Everlasting unto Everlasting He is* GOD; *He dwells in that Light unto which no Man in this State of Imperfection can approach, and live*; *Whom no Man hath seen, or can see*; but is incomprehensibly *Great and Glorious*, that *we cannot by Searching find out* GOD, *we cannot find out the Almighty unto Perfection*; a GOD of *boundless Mercy and Compassion*, of spotless Purity and Holiness, *without Iniquity, Just and Righteous, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever*; *without any Variableness or Shadow of Turning*, incapable of receiving any additional Happiness, but *is a Self-sufficient and an All-sufficient* GOD.

I BELIEVE in the Unity of the GODHEAD; there are *Three Persons* that are distinguish'd One from the Other in their Ways of subsisting, *yet equally enjoy-*

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ing and poſſeſſing all the Eſſential Attributes and Perfections of the DEITY, *as Immenſity, Eternity, Infinity, Immutability, Omniſcience* and *Omnipreſence*, &c. for *there are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe Three are One:* And Perſons are commanded to be baptized in the Name of this Sacred TRINITY, whereby it appears, that the very ſame *Worſhip* which is due unto the FATHER, is to be paid to the SON and the SPIRIT, which could not be, if They were not the *Moſt High* GOD in the ſame Eſſence with the FATHER; and though this is a Myſtery above my Comprehenſion, yet I believe it on the Word of that GOD that cannot lye.

I FARTHER *believe*, That in the Beginning GOD by his Almighty Power, and the *Word* gave Being unto all Things, created the Heavens and the Earth, *Things viſible and inviſible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers; all Things were created by Him, and for Him, Angels in the upper World, and*

Man in the lower World. But ſome of the Angels, tho' glorious in their Primitive State, as moſt nearly reſembling the Bleſſed GOD, in what He had freely beſtowed upon them, *kept not their firſt Eſtate, but left their own Habitation, and are reſerved in everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs unto the Judgment of the Great Day.* And as GOD hath made all Things; ſo I believe He rules and governs all by *his Providence*; *He hath ſet his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all*; yea, He limits and over-rules the ſinful Actions of his Creatures to his own Glory; but is no way the *Author* or *Abettor* of them.

I BELIEVE, among other Things, GOD *created Man in his own Image, after his Likeneſs, and gave him Dominion over the Fowls of the Air, the Fiſhes of the Sea, and the Beaſts of the Field*; and conſtituted him *Lord* of this *viſible Creation, putting all Things under his Feet*; and when GOD had thus created Man pure and holy, and enrich'd his Soul with many excel-

excellent Gifts and Endowments, *I believe* He condeſcended to Covenant with him, as the *natural and federal Head, and Repreſentative of Mankind*, and was pleas'd to try his Obedience by this Prohibition, *That he ſhould not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, threatning Death in Caſe of Diſobedience: For it cannot be doubted, but GOD had made him, ſo he had an indiſputable Right to rule and govern him, and to make what Laws He ſhould think fit and proper for him to obſerve and obey; and it is not to be queſtion'd, but GOD gave him ſufficient Power to do his Duty, or at leaſt, was ready to give him further Aid and Aſſiſtance upon his Application to Him for it. *But baſe and ungrateful Man*, unmindful of the great Favours he had then lately receiv'd from GOD, and the Obligations under which he was put, to obey, ſerve, and pleaſe GOD, thro' the Subtilty of the Serpent, the Devil, was perſuaded to venture on that which GOD had ſo peremptorily and poſitively forbidden;

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by which I verily believe, he ruin'd and involv'd in great Sin and Misery, not only himself, but all that should hereafter come from him by *ordinary Generation*; *By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death hath passed upon all, for that all have sinned*; and, *by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation*; that now, *what is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and none can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean Thing:* Therefore I *must believe*, That all mere Men, that spring from *Adam* are naturally corrupt, Sinners from the Womb, and Heirs of Wrath; for by this Apostacy from GOD, Man lost his *original* Righteousness, the *Image of God* was in a great Measure defac'd in his Soul, and he, who a little before, was the Object of GOD's Love and Delight, afterwards became loathsome and filthy in his Sight; Man having corrupted himself, lost the Favour of GOD, and expos'd himself unto his Wrath in Time and to all Eternity; and in this sinful and miserable Condition, GOD might have left us, as He did the apo-

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ſtate Angels; but it pleas'd GOD, who hath *Mercy on whom He will have Mercy, and Compaſſion on whom He will have Compaſſion,* to pity us in our low Eſtate, and to give forth a Gracious Promiſe, *That the Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Serpent's Head:* When we were dropping into Miſery, this was the Language of his Grace, *Deliver them from going down to the Pit, I have found a Ranſome; I have laid Help on One that is Mighty to ſave:* When we lay weltring and polluted in our Blood, and none pity'd, or was able to help, *then God's own Arm brought Salvation, by which Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.*

I BELIEVE in the LORD JESUS CHRIST the Second in the moſt Sacred TRINITY, *who being in the Form of* GOD, *thought it no robbery, to be equal with* GOD, *the brightneſs of his Glory, the expreſs Image of his Perſon,* GOD *by Nature,* the Father's proper and Natural Son by an Eternal but incomprehenſible Generation,

who

who made all things, and without him was not any thing made that was made, therefore he himſelf muſt be uncreated, ſince it was impoſſible he ſhould contribute unto the making of himſelf. Farther,

I BELIEVE according to the *Eternal Compact* between the Eternal Father, and this his Son, in the fulneſs of Time, CHRIST, the Great *Shilo*, the *Meſſias* ſpoken of by the Prophets of Old, and prefigur'd by many Types and Shadows under the *Moſaick* diſpenſation, *took upon him the Seed of* Abraham, *appeared in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, and was made like unto his Brethren in all things, Sin only excepted, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Prieſt in Things pertaining to* GOD, *to make reconciliation for the Sins of the People; He was Holy, Harmleſs, Undefiled, and ſeparate from Sinners, yet a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; and being found in Faſhion of a Man, He humbled Himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs; He ſuf-*

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fered for Sins, the Juſt for the Unjuſt; was made a Curſe for Us, and died in our Room and Place, by which *He obtain'd Eternal Redemption for us*; ſo that his Death was a *propitiatory Sacrifice*, by which GOD the Father was ſatisfy'd; *for God hath ſet Him forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteouſneſs, for the Remiſſion of Sins that are paſs'd thro' his Forbearance, that He might be Juſt, and the Juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.*

I BELIEVE, *on the third Day He roſe again from the Dead, according to the Scriptures, and ſhewed Himſelf alive after his Paſſion by many infallible Proofs, being ſeen of his Diſciples Forty Days, and ſpeaking of the Things appertaining to the Kingdom of God*; and after He had given Commandment to them to preach the Goſpel, with a Promiſe to ſend his Spirit unto them, He aſcended up *unto the Father's Right Hand, where He maketh Interceſſion, appearing in the Preſence of God for us.*

I BELIEVE in the HOLY GHOST the Third in the Sacred TRINITY, who proceeds from the FATHER and the SON, yet GOD co-equal with them, who applies unto us the Benefits that CHRIST hath purchaſed by dying, *and works in us to will and to do of his own good Pleaſure*, and makes all the Ordinances effectual to the Conviction and Converſion of Sinners, and to the Edification of the Saints in their moſt Holy Faith; he ſtrives with us, and makes the Elect willing in the Day of his Power, by enlightening their Minds, perſuading their Wills, ſanctifying their Hearts, purifying their Souls, working Faith in them; and ſo raiſeth them from the Death of Sin, unto the Life of Grace; for ſince the Fall, it is not in the Power of Man to change his own Heart, or to do any thing that will be acceptable to GOD, without the Help and Aſſiſtance of the Bleſſed Spirit, which GOD promiſeth unto thoſe that ſincerely and heartily ſeek to Him for it.

I BELIEVE that GOD hath had a *Church* in all Ages of the World, which He hath govern'd, guided and preſerv'd by his gracious Providence, in Oppoſition to all the Deſigns of Earth and Hell againſt it; *He hath built his Church on a Rock, and hath promiſed that the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*; this *Church* (I believe) is not confin'd to any particular Set of Men or Chriſtians, but comprehends all that in all Places and Times of the World, *Worſhip God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no Confidence in the Fleſh*, and are united under the Lord JESUS CHRIST, who is the *King*, and *onely Head of the Church*; but beſides theſe, who are the Members of the inviſible Church, there are many others, that make a credible Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, who are to be accounted Members of the viſible Church of CHRIST, and in that reſpect it may be call'd the *Catholick*, or *Univerſal Church*, as taking in all that call and profeſs themſelves Chriſtians; in this He trains up Souls for everlaſting Life; for which End and Purpoſe, He hath ap-

pointed *his Word*, and order'd it to be committed to Writing, which, *I believe*, is of *Divine Authority*, and contains all Things neceſſary unto Salvation; *For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*; theſe *Holy Scriptures, which were given by Inſpiration of God, and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction and Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto every good Work*, *theſe Scriptures*, I believe, *are able to make us wiſe unto Salvation, thro' Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; this *Sacred Book*, I profeſs to take for my only *Rule of Faith, Hope and Life*, and do *reſolve*, by the *Grace of God*, to meditate in it all my Days, to take all my Meaſures from it, and follow the Directions contain'd in it, and in the whole Courſe of my Miniſtry, to keep cloſe to the *Mind* and *Will of God* therein reveal'd and declar'd, and do *Promiſe*, by the *Aſſiſtance* of the *Holy Spirit*, to ſeal the Truth thereof with my Blood, if ever GOD in his Providence ſhould call me thereunto.

I BELIEVE that the *Lord* JESUS CHRIST *as the Head and Teacher of his Church*, hath appointed a *Goſpel Miniſtry*, a Set of Men whoſe Buſineſs it is, *to Preach the Goſpel*, and make Offers and Tenders of Grace to loſt Sinners, to Woo and Beſeech them in CHRIST's Stead to be reconcil'd unto GOD, to adminiſter the *Sacraments*, *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's-Supper*, which are the two Seals of the Covenant of Grace, and to exerciſe *Diſcipline*, according unto the *Goſpel Rule*, that Men, after due Examination into the Qualifications, neceſſary for ſo great a Work, are, according to CHRIST's Appointment, to be devoted to the Service of the *Sanctuary*, by *ſolemn Faſting*, *Prayer*, and *Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery*, and ſo are to be recommended unto GOD, and the Word of his *Grace*, with *whom Chriſt hath promiſ'd to be unto the End of the World.*

I FURTHER *believe*, in order to obtain everlaſting Happineſs, we muſt be born again, and be made Partakers of a *Divine Nature*, and repent of all our Sins, and by a true

a true and lively *Faith, that worketh by Love,* rely on the Lord JESUS CHRIST for Juſtification in the Sight of GOD, and that all the *Saints* here on Earth, are to keep up *External Communion* with one another in all the *Ordinances* of the *Goſpel*, and *as lively Stones are to be built up a ſpiritual Houſe, an holy Prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable unto God by Jeſus Chriſt.*

I BELIEVE, there will be a *Reſurrection of the Juſt and of the Unjuſt, that the Bodies of all that ſleep in the Duſt ſhall ariſe, that what was ſown in Weakneſs, will be rais'd in Power; what was ſown in Diſhonour, will be rais'd in Glory; what was ſown a natural Body, will be rais'd a ſpiritual Body; for the Trumpet will ſound, and the Dead will be rais'd incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed; the Lord Himſelf will deſcend with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel and the Trump of God, and the Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; then thoſe that are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be chang'd*

and

and caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the the Air; for *I believe*, that our *Bleſſed Saviour* will come with *Power and great Glory* (*attended with a vaſt Number of thoſe Morning Stars*, that *in the Beginning ſang together, and thoſe Sons of God that ſhouted for Joy*) *to Judge both Quick and Dead.* And

Finally, I BELIEVE *all will appear before the Judgment Seat of* CHRIST, *that Every one may receive according to what they have done in the Body, whether it be Good or Evil*; *the Dead ſmall and great ſhall ſtand before Him, and the Books will be opened, and all will be Judged out of thoſe Books according unto their Works, and after a ſtrict Enquiry made into what* hath been done in this World, CHRIST will proceed to pronounce a ſolemn and impartial Sentence, which will never be reverſed; He will then ſay unto the *Wicked*, thoſe that would not hear his Voice, nor hearken to his Calls, *Depart from me, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; it will then be in vain for them

them *to call on the Mountains to fall on them, and to the Hills to hide them from the Face of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb*; it will then be to no Purpoſe, to ſeek unto him for Mercy, for He will appear unto them as the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, to avenge his Father's Quarrel; *then will be the great Day of his Wrath, And who will be able to ſtand*? But *Believers* (among whom I hope to be found) *will have Confidence, and not be aſhamed at his Coming; they will then ſhine forth as the Stars in the Firmament, and lift up their Heads with Joy, becauſe their compleat Redemption draweth nigh*; for unto them He will pronounce a moſt grateful and welcome Sentence, *Come, ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World*: And theſe two Sentences will be accordingly executed, the former *ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

FINIS.